UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
31st meeting
held on
Tuesday, 24 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

later: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 145: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 concerning agenda item 18

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

* Items considered together.

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

92-57983 6492S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/47/SR.31
14 December 1992
ENGLISH:
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/30; A/C.5/47/25 and A/C.5/47/36-38)

AGENDA ITEM 114: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/9 and A/47/578; A/C.5/47/8 and A/C.5/47/25)

1. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that her delegation shared the Secretary-General's view that the United Nations should be able to recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre, and it reaffirmed its support for the Noblemaire and Flemming principles. She regretted that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had not conducted the study on the highest-paid civil service, since she seriously doubted that the United States civil service was still the most highly remunerated. Her delegation requested that the study should be conducted.

2. Her delegation shared the Secretary-General's conviction that the conditions of employment of the Professional and higher categories were not competitive. It therefore supported the Commission's recommendation for a 6.9 upward adjustment in the base/floor salary scale and agreed to consider any future adjustments on an annual basis. Her delegation also endorsed the increases proposed for the dependency allowances and the education grant, which merely compensated for inflation. Likewise, her delegation was not a priori opposed to the recommendations of ICSC to increase the remuneration of Assistant Secretaries-General, Under-Secretaries-General, Directors and Professional staff.

3. With regard to the remuneration of the General Service and related categories and the methodology for surveys of conditions of employment, she stressed the need for strict adherence to the Flemming principle. Her delegation was concerned at the Commission's decision concerning that method, since the exclusion of employers with fewer than 100 employees might distort the surveys, particularly in small countries. Moreover, her delegation could not approve the elimination of the language factor in duty stations where the local language was not a working language of the United Nations.

4. She noted that the tripartite body of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board had been unable to agree on the methodology for determining the pensionable remuneration for the General Service and related categories. The "decisions" contained in paragraph 99 of the ICSC report (A/47/30) were unconvincing: the choice of the percentage of net salary for the calculation of pensionable remuneration seemed arbitrary. It was essential to find a solution acceptable to the three parties represented on the Pension Board. Her delegation requested that the General Assembly should consider the question at its forty-ninth session.

5. Moreover, she questioned whether the Commission could decide on the methodology governing pensionable remuneration in the light of article 11 (b)

(Ms. Rotheiser, Austria)

of its statute. The provisions of paragraph 99 of the ICSC report should therefore not be considered to be decisions but merely recommendations. The issue should be taken up by the Pension Board, and it was up to the General Assembly to decide on the Board's recommendations; that should be reflected in the Committee's resolution regarding the matter.

6. Her delegation cautioned against opening the door to exceptional measures, such as the establishment of special rates for certain professional groups, which could undermine the common system. Her delegation supported the recommendation of ICSC that the General Assembly should make it mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to any aspect of conditions of employment, other than pensions, were discussed.

7. Her delegation commended the wise investment policy of the Pension Fund, whose market value had increased in spite of the overall slow-down of the world economy. However, her delegation was concerned at the outstanding tax refunds, which had reached $US 7.8 million at the end of September 1992. It agreed with the Board of Auditors that more effective measures should be taken in effecting appropriate disposition of the outstanding taxes. The Pension Fund should consider stopping any investment in countries that did not recognize its tax-exempt status.

8. Her delegation stressed the importance of an ongoing dialogue between ICSC and staff representatives, since an improvement of relations between the two parties would be in the interest of the United Nations system as a whole.

9. Ms. SHEARHOUSE (United States of America) said that ICSC and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board faced the difficult task of reconciling the need to offer competent staff attractive conditions of employment while taking into account the very real resource constraints faced by Member States as the responsibilities of the United Nations system expanded. Her delegation was pleased with the plans of ICSC and the Pension Board to biennialize their programmes of work, and it concurred with the Commission's request that adjustments to the base/floor salary scale should continue to be considered on an annual basis.

10. Her delegation supported the decisions of ICSC regarding the decision of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to grant a special post allowance, and unreservedly supported the recommendation that the General Assembly should make it mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to conditions of employment were discussed. It was the responsibility of governing councils to support the Assembly's decisions and prevent the implementation of any measure that might be harmful to the common system. Executive heads should exercise restraint in proposing actions that were not compatible with the common system.

(Ms. Shearhouse, United States)

11. While her delegation generally endorsed the recommendations, contained in paragraph 69 of the ICSC report, concerning pensionable remuneration for ungraded officials, it would prefer that United Nations officials participated in the Pension Fund. It also supported the general thrust of the recommendations regarding the methodology for determining the pensionable remuneration for the General Service and related categories, since the current method gave rise to anomalies. Paragraph 99 (e) of the report provided adequate transitional measures to protect already attained pensionable remuneration levels in cases where the revised pensionable remuneration levels were lower than those currently in effect.

12. Her delegation could support the proposed increase in the base/floor salary scale. However, it was difficult to understand how the measure in question could generate an increase of $8.8 million in staff assessment, as indicated in paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/47/37, while the Secretariat had estimated the costs for 1993 at slightly over $1 million.

13. Her delegation supported the conclusions of ICSC concerning the rental subsidy. It also supported the introduction of special occupational rates for certain professional groups in the common system. With respect to the proposed increases in dependency allowances for the Professional and higher categories, her delegation could support the proposed increase of the children's allowance but it had strong reservations about the proposed increase in the secondary dependant's allowance, and recommended that it should remain at its current level. While her delegation could support the proposed increases in the education grant, it requested a breakdown by level of education of the increases in the maximum reimbursable level and the increase in boarding costs. It looked forward to the results of the review of the total cost to the common system of education grant entitlements, and requested that that information should also be broken down by education level and made available to Member States.

14. Her delegation did not see the need to revise the methodology for determining the cost-of-living difference between New York and Washington. Since the salaries of the comparator civil service had recently been changed to reflect the duty station, it seemed more logical that the cost of labour for the comparator in New York should have more bearing on what the United Nations paid its staff in New York. Rather than continuing the study, it would be more worthwhile to consider how the comparator's new pay-setting practices would affect those of the common system.

15. With regard to the conditions of service of Assistant Secretaries-General and Under-Secretaries-General, she noted that, in paragraph 207 of its report, ICSC recommended approximate working equivalents between those categories and equivalent officials in the comparator civil service. While it recognized the difficulties in making any technically sound determination of grade equivalencies, the Commission had used the approximate working equivalents as a basis for recommending a 7 per cent to 11 per cent increase in remuneration

(Ms. Shearhouse, United States)

levels for the aforementioned officials. Since equivalencies had little value, her delegation could not support the recommendation based on them. With regard to housing arrangements for officials at those levels, ICSC recommended increased subsidies without providing any justification or imposing any limitations, leaving it to each organization to develop precise guidelines on the matter. Her delegation would prefer to have a universally applicable set of guidelines established. As for representation allowances, which should not be simply salary supplements, she recommended that action on the Commission's proposal should be deferred until ICSC proposed guidelines on the matter. On a more general level, her delegation recommended that all decisions regarding conditions of service of Assistant Secretaries-General and Under-Secretaries-General should be deferred until the Secretariat reform undertaken by the Secretary-General was completed.

16. She hoped that ICSC would, as a priority, review the imbalance between the margin levels for upper and lower Professional grades, recommend corrective measures, and submit its report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

17. Her delegation was pleased to note that the mobility and hardship scheme appeared to be fulfilling its intended purpose. She agreed with the Commission's decision to review the question in 1995, at which time its impact could better be assessed.

18. With respect to the chapter of the report dealing with the remuneration of the General Service and related categories, she agreed with the recommended refinements in the application of the methodology for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations.

19. Her delegation welcomed the Commission's recommendations relating to the status of women in the common system, and supported the thrust of those recommendations.

20. With regard to the report of the Joint Staff Pension Board, she commended those responsible for managing the investments of the Pension Fund, and agreed with the current plans for preserving the principal of the Fund. Her delegation regretted that the Pension Board had been unable to reach a consensus on the pensionable remuneration of staff in the General Service and related categories.

21. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) said that the granting of a special post allowance to 90 per cent of the employees of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) was incompatible with the application of the common system and General Assembly resolution 46/191. His delegation therefore agreed with the decision of ICSC in that regard, in particular, the recommendation that it should be mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to conditions of employment were discussed.

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

22. The proper functioning and transparency of ICSC in its work depended, inter alia, on staff participation under rule 37 of the Commission's rules of procedure. Bangladesh regretted that the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and the Coordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations system had suspended their participation in the Commission's work, and hoped that they would reverse their decision, in the greater interest of all.

23. His delegation welcomed the arrangements regarding the biennialization of the programme of work of the Fifth Committee, and, at the same time, agreed with the Commission's decision to request the General Assembly to agree to examine adjustments to the base/floor salary scale on an annual basis. The Assembly should also consider future across-the-board increases in salary on a timely basis without waiting for an even-numbered year.

24. Bangladesh supported the decision to increase the base/floor salary scale by 6.9 per cent with effect from 1 March 1993. It welcomed the Commission's decision to examine the feasibility of establishing special occupational rates and looked forward to the report on the question to be submitted by the Commission in 1993.

25. His delegation supported the Commission's decision to maintain the existing methodology for the determination of dependency allowances for the Professional and higher categories, as well as the recommendation for an increase in those allowances with effect from 1 January 1993. It also supported the recommendations relating to the mobility and hardship scheme in paragraphs 282 and 283 of the Commission's report.

26. The most serious problem with regard to pensionable remuneration for General Service staff stemmed from income inversion. There were divergent views on the income replacement approach recommended in resolution 46/192 but, whatever position might be taken, what was important was to recognize the legitimate claims of future beneficiaries while at the same time ensuring equity among staff members in different categories.

27. There was a perception among some that the methodology for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations might contradict the Flemming principle by excluding from the comparison some of the best employers and including employers that paid excessively low salaries. The staff representatives were also opposed to having the ICSC secretariat supervise the preparation phase. He hoped that reason would prevail, and believed that any change should not only be technically sound but should also not result in the erosion of current conditions.

28. His delegation hoped that the recommendations of the Working Group on the Status of Women in the United Nations System would give further momentum to the efforts already under way in that regard. He wished to emphasize that, in the recruitment of women, special attention should be paid to women from the developing countries and to equitable geographical distribution.

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

29. His delegation noted that no consensus had been reached in the Joint Staff Pension Board on the question of the pensionable remuneration of General Service staff. He agreed with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) that it was important to guard against creating new anomalies in the process of eliminating others. His delegation appreciated the sound management of the investment of the Pension Fund investments.

30. Mr. KERSTEIN (Slovenia) said that, although Slovenia was not yet represented in the international civil service, it attached great importance to the common system and to the work of ICSC, whose impartiality must be beyond reproach. The independence of ICSC, which had been upheld by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, was absolutely essential.

31. His delegation believed that the unilateral decision taken by ITU to pay a special post allowance to a great portion of its staff undermined the coherence and the purpose of the common system, and certainly did not contribute to the elimination of competition in the recruitment of personnel. His delegation shared the view of ICSC that the action by ITU should not constitute a precedent, and strongly supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 43 (f) of its report.

32. His delegation was concerned about the decision of the staff representatives to suspend participation in the work of the Commission; that decision was unjustified and detrimental to the common system. Moreover, while the staff representatives should, indeed, be allowed to express their views in the Fifth Committee, the tone of one statement, which had directly questioned the legitimacy of ICSC, was most regrettable. It was for all parties concerned, and not for the Commission alone, to endeavour to strengthen the common system.

33. The conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories were of particular importance, and his delegation would therefore examine with interest the Commission's recommendation that the base/floor salary scale should be increased by 6.9 per cent with effect from 1 March 1993 (A/47/30, para. 118). As for the evolution of the margin between the net remuneration of the United States Federal Civil Service and that of the United Nations system, it agreed with the Commission that no action was necessary at the current stage in the management of the margin over the five-year period 1990-1994.

34. His delegation supported the Commission's recommendation regarding the introduction of special occupational rates as a means of addressing recruitment and retention problems for some technical occupations, provided that the Commission worked closely with the organizations involved in identifying the occupational groups and that those rates were not applied to the entire staff of the organizations concerned, since that could seriously damage the common system. With regard to the mobility and hardship scheme,

(Mr. Kerstein, Slovenia)

Slovenia supported the Commission's recommendation that the existing parameters should be maintained until the follow-up report was submitted in 1995.

35. The methodology for determining pensionable remuneration for General Service staff created a serious problem of income inversion that could undermine the morale of the Professional staff. The Commission's decisions on that subject (A/47/30, para. 99) were a step in the right direction.

36. Mr. RAE (India) said he hoped that the question of the conditions of service of both Professional and the General Service staff, which gave rise to profound differences of opinion and was of great concern to the staff, could be resolved satisfactorily for all concerned. Whatever the satisfaction of working towards the noble objectives of the United Nations, the staff must be paid adequately if they were to be expected to perform with dedication the difficult and even dangerous tasks entrusted to them.

37. The Noblemaire principle had served well over the past four decades. However, some now thought that the common system was not flexible enough to respond adequately and expeditiously to the specific requirements of the organizations. The unilateral decision of ITU to grant a special post allowance illustrated that point. There was no question of jettisoning the Noblemaire principle, but it was perhaps time for the Commission to examine its application and suggest improvements. The biennialization of the Committee's work should give the Commission enough time to consider that issue.

38. The methodology for determining the pensionable remuneration of the General Service staff, which had aroused great controversy, should be logical and technically coherent. It was necessary gradually to correct the anomalies that had arisen while protecting the acquired rights of the staff. His delegation strongly supported the implementation of transitional measures. It agreed generally with the Commission's recommendations aimed at solving the income inversion problem with respect to General Service and Professional staff (A/47/30, para. 99). Its only reservation concerned the grossing-up procedures; it was not convinced of the need for a single scale of assessment rates for all staff and continued to favour the local tax approach, which had the advantage of simplicity. Information on the tax factor could easily be obtained when the General Service salary surveys were conducted.

39. The methodology used to carry out surveys of the conditions of service of General Service staff should be objective and transparent and should be based on the objectives of the Flemming principle. His delegation was in favour of the Commission playing a greater role in the supervision of surveys. However, it would like additional information on the reasons for the recommendation to increase from 50 to 100 the minimum number of employees in the selection of employers for inclusion in a survey.

40. His delegation agreed with the Commission that the mobility and hardship scheme was not an end in itself but a management tool to assist the

(Mr. Rae, India)

organizations in rotation and assignment to hardship locations. Ideally, the terms and conditions of service should specifically provide for staff rotation. It was important to keep under review the question of the link between the base/floor salary scale and the mobility and hardship allowance, which made the scheme very costly. The organizations had strongly supported the continuation of the current scheme, which, they had said, made it possible to deploy staff effectively and reduce transfer costs and the number of vacancies. However, his delegation was not convinced that that scheme was the only viable solution, and it would like to obtain concrete figures on the savings achieved since the introduction of the scheme, as well as information on the reduction in the number of vacancies, particularly in United Nations Development Programme field offices.

41. His delegation wished to thank those involved in the management of the Pension Fund's investments, who had succeeded in obtaining a real rate of return of 4.3 per cent despite the world-wide stagnation in economic growth. It was happy to note the increase in investments in developing countries and the progress made in refunding outstanding tax claims.

42. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that the biennialization of the Committee's programme of work, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 46/220, should not be allowed to affect the staff adversely. The Commission's decision to request the Assembly to examine adjustments of the base/floor salary scale on an annual basis should solve that problem.

43. His delegation deplored the unilateral decision of ITU to pay a special post allowance to 90 per cent of its staff in the Professional and higher categories, despite the categoric opposition of ICSC and the General Assembly. It agreed with the Commission that that decision should not constitute a precedent and supported the recommendation that it should be mandatory for all organizations to invite the Commission to be represented at meetings where proposals pertaining to salaries, allowances, benefits and other conditions of employment were discussed.

44. His delegation thought it should be possible to reach an acceptable solution to the very thorny problem of pensionable remuneration for General Service staff without resorting to a reduction that might be seen as arbitrary. The Commission's recommendation that the base/floor salary scale should be increased by 6.9 per cent with effect from 1 March 1993 was commendable.

45. His delegation hoped that refinements would be made as quickly as possible in the methodology for determining the cost-of-living differential between New York and Washington, which was deficient. It supported in principle the use of special occupational rates and agreed that the Commission should work with the other organizations to identify occupational groups in technical fields where there had been serious difficulty in recruitment. Indonesia was in principle in favour of the proposed increase in the

(Mr. Wibisono, Indonesia)

children's allowance and the secondary dependant's allowance. With regard to the review of the general methodology for surveys of the best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations, there was general agreement on the validity of the Flemming principle. However, the staff representatives had expressed concern about the decisions taken by ICSC, which should perhaps seek to alleviate the doubts about the validity of the surveys. Above all, efforts had to be made to obtain objective data which could not be regarded as aimed at a preconceived result.

46. His delegation acknowledged the efforts made by the Working Group on the Status of Women in the United Nations System to identify the problems faced by women, recommend solutions and set targets for their representation.

AGENDA ITEM 145: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA (A/47/607 and A/47/674)

47. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the reports of the Secretary-General and the decisions of the Security Council concerning the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) were mentioned in paragraph 2 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/47/674). The Security Council, which had established UNOSOM by its resolution 751 (1992) of 24 April 1992, had subsequently increased the total strength of the force to 4,219 all ranks, including a logistic support contingent of 719.

48. With regard to the question of the mandate of UNOSOM, addressed in paragraph 7 of the Advisory Committee's report, the Secretary-General had recommended that UNOSOM be established for an initial period of six months and had drawn up estimates for six-month periods running from 1 May 1992 to 31 October 1993. However, the Security Council had not yet specified the length of UNOSOM's mandate; the Advisory Committee considered it important that the question should be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

49. The initial estimate of total costs of the operation for the period from 1 May 1992 to 31 October 1993, including the pre-implementation phase, amounted to $208.1 million. The related observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee were contained in paragraphs 10 to 42 of its report. As indicated in paragraph 20, the deterioration of conditions in Somalia might jeopardize the full deployment of the operation as planned. The delay in the deployment of troops would affect the expenditure estimates for the period from 1 November 1992 to 30 April 1993.

50. With regard to accommodation, a considerable number of prefabricated units had been diverted from the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which would probably not insist on their immediate replacement. On the basis of previous recommendations of the Advisory Committee which had already been accepted by the Fifth Committee, it was recommended that the cost of those units should not be included in the UNOSOM

budget. In paragraph 39 of its report, the Advisory Committee pointed out the need to coordinate effectively all UNOSOM activities under the authority of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia.

51. As indicated in paragraph 42 of its report, the Advisory Committee was recommending an appropriation and assessment of $6,953,100 gross ($6,741,600 net) for the period from 1 May to 31 October 1992 and $102,698,900 gross ($101,172,200 net) for the period from 1 November 1992 to 30 April 1993. It would examine the cost estimates for future periods in the light of the report which the Secretary-General intended to submit within the next six months and of the decisions of the Security Council.

52. Mr. BOIN (France) said that his delegation endorsed the comment made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 9 of its report, i.e. that the Secretary-General's report contained insufficient detailed information under a number of items of expenditure. The draft resolution to be prepared by the Fifth Committee should contain a clear request for the Secretariat to include in its reports the elements mentioned in paragraph 40 of the ACABQ report.

53. With regard to purchases of vehicles in particular, his delegation wondered about the necessity of purchasing, or even renting, so much equipment and so many vehicles at a time when Member States had more than ample stocks of military equipment, in particular four-wheel drive vehicles, which they could assign to UNOSOM as voluntary contributions. An appeal to that effect should be made to Member States in the draft resolution. Furthermore, as the auditors had requested, it was absolutely essential to comply with the competitive bidding procedures and keep a very accurate inventory of equipment.

54. Good coordination was a guarantee of efficiency and economy, but it was not clear from a reading of paragraph 39 whether the Special Representative of the Secretary-General had the necessary authority to ensure the coordination of the activities of all the United Nations bodies in Somalia. In that connection the comment on the problems of sharing premises made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 15 of its report gave rise to some concern.

55. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that an effort should be made to speed up the establishment of the budgets of peace-keeping operations. The Secretariat certainly had difficulties but, by definition, a budget must be drawn up before the beginning of the period in question. As to the submission of budgets, in paragraph 40 of its report the Advisory Committee requested the Secretariat to provide detailed information for an informed evaluation of the cost estimates. It added in paragraph 41 that the recent reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of peace-keeping operations did not address the concerns of the Advisory Committee with regard to the format and costing of the operations. His delegation endorsed those comments in full.

56. With regard to the duration of the mandate of UNOSOM, in paragraph 24 (c) of his report the Secretary-General recommended to the General Assembly that

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

it should authorize commitments for the period beyond 30 April 1993, should the operation be continued beyond that date. The Secretariat was presenting estimates based on its own assumptions and not on a decision of the Security Council. His delegation thought that before approving appropriations and their apportionment it was essential to know the duration of the operation's mandate. For what would happen if the operation was suspended? His delegation supposed that if the views stated by the ACABQ in paragraph 7 of its report were approved by the Committee and the General Assembly, the Secretariat would play the role of intermediary between the Assembly and the Security Council, which was the organ empowered to decide on the duration of the mandate.

57. The Japanese delegation had no difficulty with reducing the resources allocated to UNOSOM by $14.5 million, for that ACABQ recommendation was based on an expert review and was not a budget cut. With regard to the prefabricated units to be transferred to UNOSOM from other operations, Member States must not be required to pay twice for the same material. His delegation therefore supported the relevant recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

58. Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

59. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) said that his delegation was seriously worried about the situation in Somalia and supported UNOSOM unreservedly. It sincerely hoped that the parties concerned would combine their efforts to ensure peace and security in Somalia. It endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning the military expenditures. On the subject of documentation it wished to point out that it had received document A/47/674 only an hour before the beginning of the meeting and that document A/47/607 had not yet been distributed in Chinese. Since that made the Chinese delegation's consideration of the item more complicated, it might have requested deferral of the debate. However, it had not done so in order not to disrupt the Committee's work. But the Secretariat ought to make the necessary arrangements to prevent any recurrence of such a situation.

60. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation fully supported the United Nations operation in Somalia. It was glad that the Security Council had been able to make an appropriate recommendation on the mandate of the operation and that the personnel had been reinforced, particularly in the first contingent. It shared some of the doubts of the Japanese delegation about the operation's budget but thought that the Secretariat had been right to submit estimates for periods beyond the first phase. As the representative of France had suggested, it was also necessary to establish closer cooperation among the various United Nations bodies, under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. In paragraph 34 of its report the Advisory Committee said that late arrival of aircraft would result in a saving. Before the Committee welcomed that saving, it would have to know whether the late arrival did not in fact represent a cost in terms of the efficiency of the operation.

61. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) asked whether it would be possible to invite an official responsible for field operations to attend the informal consultations on the item.

62. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) agreed with the representative of Japan that it was regrettable that so much time had been needed to implement the decision of the Security Council. He understood that, given the situation in the field, it had not been possible to take any decision regarding the length of the mandate. In that regard he shared some of the concerns expressed by the Advisory Committee. He trusted that other countries would make a contribution to ensure the success of the operation.

63. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller), responding to the representative of Australia, said that all the Secretariat officials in a position to respond to the questions raised would be present at the informal consultations. He had taken note of the comments of the representatives of France and of Japan regarding coordination and the powers of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Special Representative had been invested with all the authority normally delegated by the Secretary-General for such operations, but given the tragic situation in Somalia it would be appropriate to strengthen coordination. With regard to the mandate of the operation, a means must be found of satisfying budgetary imperatives while meeting the concerns of the Security Council. The Assembly would need to meet again if the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the operation, but that was routine. With regard to the comments in paragraph 40 of the Advisory Committee's report, he acknowledged that the information provided to the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee should be improved. At times there was a need to reconcile two conflicting objectives: to prepare the required budget quickly yet to submit full and accurate information. Further, the submission of the budgets of peace-keeping operations was even more complex than in the case of the regular budget. In any event the Secretariat would continue to strive for greater transparency.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 concerning agenda item 18 (A/C.5/47/48)

64. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), reporting orally on behalf of the Advisory Committee, said that the activities called for under the draft resolutions were described in paragraphs 1 to 11 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/48). The additional requirements at full cost were set out in paragraphs 12 to 17. Paragraph 14 indicated total additional requirements of $541,400 (including $293,800 for the holding of a seminar in the Pacific region). In the light of past experience in implementing the Special Committee's programme of work, the Secretary-General estimated that requirements would not exceed $379,000, a figure which fell within the balance of the appropriation under section 37 of the programme budget for the 1992-1993

(Mr. Mselle)

biennium. Accordingly, the Committee might wish to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolutions under consideration, no additional appropriations would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

65. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/48) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 be adopted, it would be necessary to modify the programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993 as indicated in paragraph 10 of document A/C.5/47/48, but that no additional appropriations would be required under sections 31, 37 or 41 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

66. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 105: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued) (A/47/3, A/47/6, A/47/16 (Parts I and II and Add.1), A/47/32 and Add.1; A/C.5/47/46 and Add.1)

Major programmes IX (Common support services) and X (Administrative services)

67. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee on Conferences had reviewed the proposed revisions to programme 39 of major programme IX at its 1992 session and that in paragraph 105 of its report (A/47/32) it recommended approval of the revisions, with some cosmetic modifications.

68. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that it was surprising that the Advisory Committee had not submitted its comments on the two major programmes in question to the Fifth Committee, contrary to procedure under the current regulations. The Committee should not establish a regrettable precedent by making recommendations to the General Assembly without having consulted the competent technical body.

69. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that under the regulations the Advisory Committee should consider major programmes IX and X, but it had had no time to do so. The planning process as a whole needed to be reviewed, including those aspects relating to consultation with intergovernmental organs.

70. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) agreed with the representative of Japan and proposed that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should be asked for his comments.

71. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom), Mr. BIDNY (Russian Federation) and Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) supported the comments made by the representative of Japan and urged the Committee to follow established procedure.

72. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Fifth Committee wished to invite the Advisory Committee to consider major programmes IX and X and to report thereon orally as soon as possible.

73. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.